

**Opening Statement of the Honorable John Shimkus**  
**Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy**  
**Hearing on “ The Chemicals in Commerce Act”**  
**March 12, 2014**

*(As Prepared for Delivery)*

Over the past year we have participated in five hearings at which we've dug into TSCA, learning the issues section by section, and thinking about how we could make this law work better. In recent weeks we've had several conversations at the Member level. We've exchanged thoughts on where we can find common ground.

Our staffs have sat down on a bipartisan basis for many hours to discuss the language before us in the Chemicals in Commerce Act. Those conversations have helped us understand each other's perspectives much better. That work is continuing and, I hope, will help us as Members to collaborate on a bill we can embrace going forward.

Today we give a wide variety of stakeholders the chance to weigh in. We'll hear from big and small chemical makers, and from those who use chemicals to make consumer products. We'll hear from chemical distributors, labor unions, and other interest groups.

Their testimony will show that making laws is a very dynamic process. I unveiled a discussion draft because I think we need a collaborative process with diverse input. That draft is likely to undergo changes as we work through the provisions to find consensus. If each member of this subcommittee sat down to write a TSCA bill, we'd probably have 25 different versions, no two of which would look alike. Our job is to craft a bill that reflects the best of all of us.

Where is that common ground?

So far, I think we agree that there are many chemicals already in the market that could use some closer scrutiny by EPA. We need to be sure that EPA has the information it needs to decide on the safety of a chemical, but they should not delay action merely by asking for information that they don't really need. We also agree that EPA should have the authority to impose requirements and restrictions on chemicals that pose risks, but those restrictions should be for the sake of improving the protection of human health and the environment, not simply for the sake of regulating.

We think that chemical manufacturers should be in a position to cooperate with EPA on its close scrutiny of their products, but they should still be able to protect confidential trade secrets in that process. Can we achieve all that? I know our Committee members on both sides are not only willing to try, they are already doing their best to get there.

I appreciate their hard work and promise that I'll do all I can to make sure it results in the best law we can enact for the American people.

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